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The Ideal University

BY

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IV. THE IDEAL UNIVERSITY.

BY JOEL CAMPBELL DUBOSE,¹ Birmingham.

At the close of this the seventieth year since the opening of this University it would be profitable to recount the history of those whose names are registered as professors and matriculates. Even in the earliest history of her life this University was most fortunate in the congregation of mighty spirits about her. Dr. Henry Tutwiler in the chair of ancient languages and literature; the superb Henry W. Hilliard, lifting young manhood into the delights of English literature; John F. Wallis, in chemistry, mineralogy and geology; Gurdon Saltonstall and Wm. W. Hudson in the departments of mathematics, natural philosophy and astronomy; and Rev. Alva Woods, the learned president, in the chair of metaphysics; these were the first masters who gave the original impulses to the university life of the State of Alabama. While the president was a little late in arriving, he was ably represented by Dr. Henry Tutwiler as the first acting president, whose gentle spirit and scholarly attainments fixed the impression of merited esteem and affectionate regard in the minds of the young men of the University. This list of great names might be much extended. Frederick A. P. Barnard, Rev. Basil Manly, Landon C. Garland, Richard T. Brumby, Horace S. Pratt,

¹ Joel Campbell DuBose, of Birmingham, was born December 17, 1855, near Gaston, Sumter county, Ala., and is the son of Benj. Eusebius DuBose, a native of South Carolina, who removed to Sumter county, and wife Sarah Elizabeth, daughter of Isaac and Martha Horn, who lived in the same county. Mr. DuBose was educated at Mt. Sterling high school, Choctaw county, kept by S. S. Mellen, whence he matriculated at the University of Alabama, where he was graduated in the class of 1878 with the degree of A. B.; and in 1880 he received the honorary degree of M. A. He was principal of a private academy at Birmingham for many years. At the general election of 1902, he was elected a representative from Jefferson county in the Alabama legislature as a Democrat. He is a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. On August 8, 1883, he married Alice Vivian, daughter of William T. and Eliza J. Horn, of Pushmataha, Ala. Mr. DuBose has published *Sketches of Alabama History*, (1900); "Aeschylus and The Seven against Thebes;" in the *Methodist Review*, September-October, 1899; and a sketch of Alabama, in *Pearson's Magazine*, June, 1902. He was one of the founders of the Gulf States Historical Magazine, and is at present (1904) its editor and proprietor.—EDITOR.

Michael Tuomey, John W. Mallet, Samuel M. Stafford, John W. Pratt, and others, are names suggestive of all that is most desirable and far reaching in educational and moral attainments. Some who began teaching beyond the fifties still linger in the beloved halls inviting the young to highest ideals.

And what brilliant lights illumine the scroll of the young matriculates. It is not strange, but wonderfully instructive, that so many members of the early classes became distinguished in civil, professional, mercantile and martial life. It would be invidious almost to cull the lists. Alexander B. Meek, the poet, orator and journalist; Clement C. Clay, Jr., of Confederate fame; Dr. John B. Read, inventor of the Parrott gun; Oran M. Roberts, who rose to the governorship of Texas and left his impress in the statutes and literature of that great commonwealth. These and hundreds of other sons of this University have risen to proud success through the inspiration of environment, the consciousness that education is the implement of integrity and the guide of gentlemen.

It would be a fitting tribute to Tuscaloosa to weave into the history of the University the influence of her people upon the student body. As the capital of the State, as the city on the hill at the head of navigation of a river leading from mountains to the Gulf of Mexico, as the center of social refinement and intellectual activities, Tuscaloosa was thronged with men and women who represented the best element of the old South. That her life should be an object lesson, giving the young sons of Alabama encouragement in studies and the polish of social intercourse, is but the developed outgrowth of that wisdom which determined the location of this University upon the present site.

But a wider scope than this University is to involve my subject. I shall speak to-day briefly upon "The Ideal University." No effort will be directed to discussion of the rise and magnitude of universities of the countries of Europe, wherein learning has for ages given prestige and veneration to established systems. Any one of the great universities of England, of Germany, of France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, or other country, would furnish history fraught with profound interest. It would call forth the history of education, and portray the national growth of the people in whose midst it nestles and whose institutions it has

brought into being and shaped for the happiness and political destiny of the nation. I use the term "political" in its nobler, broader sense regarding the public weal, making it applicable to whatever affects citizenship, rather than restricting it to the selfish exclusiveness of suffrage and of office. Thoroughness and original research have heretofore been the distinction claimed for courses in European universities, but American institutions have imbibed the tense spirit of the older universities; and of American universities I shall speak.

The small colleges, a theme well discussed by Dr. Wm. R. Harper, of Chicago University, have done a great work in education. They have many things which give peculiar fitness for good results. Their smaller number of professors and students guarantees the benefits of closer, friendlier intimacy than can be expected in the greater universities; but in the universities the restrictions of college give place to perfect freedom and the independence resulting conduces largely to the confirmation of lofty manhood.

There has been great munificence in the endowments of American universities. Harvard, Yale, Cornell, Chicago, Leland Stanford Jr., Johns Hopkins, and others, have felt the flow of large sympathies through rich endowments. The crude academic curriculum of Harvard in 1636 contrasted with the two hundred courses now offered at her shrine, indicates the mighty difference between her past and her present. It was Ezra Cornell who defined a university as a place where any man could go and learn about any subject that interested him. Clark University at Worcester, Massachusetts, is the only one in America where only post-graduate investigation is conducted. The undergraduate courses of the six or seven greatest American universities lead one to reflect as did one of years gone by, that students should not wish to visit Europe except for the gratification of traveling. There can be no question as to opportunities offered, and there can be no doubt that the intellect finds a delightful freedom and glorious assurances in entering the portals of the American universities. The cravings for knowledge to make society better, for intellectual and moral growth, for the power to interpret nature, to appreciate art, to relieve human wretchedness, to promote virtue, to enlarge wisdom, to foster integrity, to master the laws of

health, to obliterate ignorance and bigotry, and make secure the pursuit of happiness and the possession of life and property; these longings find their best initial life and continuous support in the great universities.

The characteristics of a university have been as changeable as the temperament of the people. Different environments, different impulses springing out of discoveries and developed resources, make demand for changing curricula; and yet that education is always safest whose foundations have been slowly laid in broad and liberal culture. Dr. Daniel C. Gilman has well said that "the object of the university is to develop character, to make men. It misses its aim when it produces learned pedants, or simple artisans, or cunning sophists, or pretentious practitioners. The purport is to whet the appetite, to exhibit methods, develop powers, strengthen judgment, and invigorate the intellectual and moral forces."

Let us look at the conditions out of which the great American universities have been evolved. Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and the University of Pennsylvania have enlarged gradually from foundations in former centuries. The later universities, Cornell, Vanderbilt, Johns Hopkins, Tulane, Chicago, Leland Stanford Jr., the Universities of Texas and of California, have become giants of the first magnitude within a single generation. Cornell was established thirty-three years ago, Vanderbilt a little later, Chicago in 1889, and Johns Hopkins in 1876,—just twenty-five years ago. Cornell became rich in landed endowments, the gift of Ezra Cornell; Vanderbilt by the munificence of Cornelius Vanderbilt; Chicago by the friendly millions of John D. Rockefeller; Leland Stanford, Jr., by the melancholy drowning of the son from whom it derives its name, stands as a memorial to that son from Senator and Mrs. Stanford. It is estimated that its foundation and endowment fund exceeds twenty millions of dollars; and Johns Hopkins with \$3,500,000 to its university departments and \$3,500,000 to a hospital, marks the ascent of its founder through fortune "to the higher and more arduous temple of Charity."

The rapid development and immense patronage of these later universities tell the power of money in securing professors and supplying the material equipment essential to studies and research.

They stand eminent in all the prestige of great responsibilities ably fulfilled.

Another prominent cause of success is the wisdom of their governing bodies in selecting presidents and professors. Cornell has had only two presidents within thirty-three years of its life, Andrew D. White and Charles G. Schurman; California has had two, Daniel C. Gilman and Benjamin Ide Wheeler; Vanderbilt has had two, Landon C. Garland and James H. Kirkland; Chicago has had one, Wm. R. Harper; and Johns Hopkins one, Daniel C. Gilman who was called to it from the presidency of the University of California twenty-five years ago. The long continued service of the presidents gave stability and confidence, invited patronage and endowments, and enabled the trustees to catch the spirit of the president, and thereby act in harmony for the common good. It brought the recognition of the superior qualification of university men to decide questions of international dispute, for representatives of Johns Hopkins, Cornell, the Universities of California and Indiana have been made members of the commissions sent by the United States to Venezuela and the Philippines, when Great Britain and Venezuela were contesting boundaries, and when the victories of United States forces in the Philippines called for investigation into the condition of those far away islands. It has been seriously suggested that the proper tribunal to which to submit all international questions will be the law faculty of a great international university.

It would be difficult to define the full power and utility of universities. They have found expression in lifting the ideals of families, in adjusting commerce, in respect for law and the purifying of religious belief, and in the advancement of knowledge; in conservatism, protecting science and religion from the error of fanaticism, in refining the senses; in distributing knowledge; in making truth the object of search and proclaiming it to the world regardless of plaudits or reproaches; these are among the highest blessings of the university. To accomplish fully its work with man, the faculty should be selected with special reference to the ability to inspire. Better that a young man should never enter a university than that he should come under the sterilizing influence of a time-serving professor. This being true, no professor should be allowed to remain in a university unless his pupils be-

come saturated with the love of his subject, unless a reasonable number become specialists and advance beyond the known limits of the subject. It is not so much the quantity as it is the quality of the instruction that forms the character of the matriculates. It is not altogether the impartation of knowledge that makes the university education desirable. The preservation of the knowledge of the past and present, and saving it for uses, is another university essential. By this means the quickening of genius, the development of latent talent, and the formative elements of all progress are kept in force. Exceptional genius will rise above all difficulties, and through discovery and invention give a larger scope to human vision, and produce the means for conserving human energy so that the engines drive machinery and the occult laws of nature do his bidding; and yet were it not that universities register what has been acquired of knowledge, and project ideas to invite the world to continuous progress, there would be fewer successes to untutored genius. The very fact that so many things have been discovered after the philosophers have dreamed them, give evidence of the life that goes from universities to the lowliest classes.

Literature and devotion to religion must be ever guarded. By religion is not meant adherence to creed, but a profound love for the high spirituality in man, and the consciousness of truth beyond the expressed formulae of creeds. A university should gather about it the greatest and most active spirits of the age. Its impulses must give tone to manhood and womanhood, and it is criminal to retain in it unfit exemplars of intellectual, moral and spiritual forces. That is "The Ideal University" where all the influences conspire to quicken intellect, to protect health, to preserve and enlarge the treasures of the ages, to develop the high qualities of all the senses, to make man capable of discharging wisely all the duties that may come to him, and by contact with nature and by study of science and man, to use all for promoting the happiness of mankind.

Would that this University of Alabama were this "ideal university." She has had a glorious history. She has felt the embarrassments of her State-squandered endowments and the depression of poverty. It may be said that her presidents were ideal leaders of youth. Her professors have ranked among the best.

With a beautiful campus in a spot as beautiful as can be found, with a nearby river and woodland backgrounds, with well-equipped laboratories, with a foundation worthy the regards of a great people, she should forge far ahead of her past and present. She has not met fully the public expectations. The claim that politics dominates her, whether true or false, has made her a by-word and reproach with many. To-day her faculty compare favorably with the masters in like positions in other institutions. But what you trustees are now called upon to do—select a president—is a duty which comes to you too often. Pardon me, but you have within the last twenty-five years had seven presidents here. A like history does not obtain in the universities that have outstripped this one in winning public approbation. Dr. Gilman has been president of Johns Hopkins for twenty-five years. Dr. Harper has been president of the University of Chicago since it was opened. The selection of a president with like fitness as these will make this university powerful in drawing endowments to her treasury, and inviting the assurance that the fortunes amassed in our midst will be left as legacies for her enlargement and for the enrichment of her courses of study. Men who spend their energies in amassing wealth recognize the power of money, and when retirement gives freedom from the cares of active business, their minds turn to the proper disposition after death of their fortunes. To place a fund in a strong institution, where young spirits will be trained for citizenship, is a temptation appealing alike to judgment and pride. If convinced that wise counsels will prevail in the management of the institution, and that the power of money will be used to the perpetual good of young manhood and young womanhood, rich men through their wills in probate will reveal bequests to aid the progress of educational enterprises. For this and other weighty reasons, you, gentlemen, ought to select a scholarly educator as the president of this university. He should be big-hearted, big brained, sympathetic, far seeing, masterful in thought and appearance, whose visit to any portion of the country, and whose presence in any body of distinguished men, would give the impression that he was the peer of the princeliest in all the elements of greatness. Such a man will lift the ambition of students, and will govern with the strength and dignity of a master. The rule of right will natur-

ally assume direction of affairs, public confidence will become an inspiration, and this University will be more lovingly enshrined in the affections and sympathies of her sons and daughters, her friends and benefactors.

You have heretofore taken the wrong method to secure a president. You have announced that you would give a certain salary for him and your honorable board has been greeted by many applicants. You should find the man who measures to the stature of the president of a great university, and then offer him as a salary \$2,500 per annum and the use of the president's mansion as a home. If this sum does not secure him, make the offer of \$3,500, and if this does not engage him, make the salary \$5,000 or even \$10,000, and then cut off some of your departments of study, if you have not the money to give that much salary and keep up the departments. If you do not observe these suggestions, you will but repeat the history of the last twenty-five years; you will have to be continually on the lookout for presidents, and as a consequence no endowments will come, unstable conditions will prevail, and many sons and daughters of Alabama will go to other States for university training. Find the right man, secure him regardless of a few thousand dollars, and the University of Alabama will flourish as never before in her history.

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